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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR T UNDERSECRETARY BOLTON

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TAGS: [IR](#) [IZ](#) [KN](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: HOLY SEE: UNDERSECRETARY BOLTON REVIEWS U.S.
EFFORTS IN IRAQ, IRAN AND NORTH KOREA

Classified By: Ambassador Jim Nicholson. Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (c) Under Secretary Bolton told Vatican Deputy Foreign Minister Parolin that the U.S. was making steady progress in Iraq, even though the security situation was not what we would like it to be. Bolton briefed Parolin on the President's meeting with Russian President Putin and the state of play in UNSC deliberations for a new Iraq resolution, emphasizing the U.S. desire to return power to the Iraqis as soon as possible. Parolin raised the Holy See's concerns about religious persecution against Christians in Iraq, but indicated that they have been encouraged by inter-religious developments to date. U/S Bolton reviewed the threat posed by Iranian nuclear development efforts, and outlined international efforts to address Iran's nuclear program. On North Korea, Bolton highlighted U.S. willingness to take North Korean security concerns into account, but expressed disappointment with the lack of progress at the last round of talks. In response to Parolin's questions, Bolton reviewed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) as a means of making better use of national legislation and law enforcement mechanisms to prevent transfers of WMD. Parolin emphasized the Holy See's commitment to multilateral arms control, and conveyed his regret that the U.S. was not more actively involved in the CTBT. End Summary.

Building a Democratic Iraq

2. (c) Under Secretary John Bolton reviewed developments in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea with Holy See' Deputy Foreign Minister Pietro Parolin October 1, emphasizing U.S. determination to address threats to international security posed by outlaw states' possession of WMD. Bolton told Parolin that this had been one of the major topics of discussion between President Bush and President Putin at their September 27 summit. On Iraq, the Under Secretary emphasized that the U.S. and Russia had overcome pre-war disagreements, and agreed on the importance of building a stable, democratic Iraq that would have a positive influence on the rest of the region. Bolton told Parolin that there were many welcome developments in Iraq, such as the opening of Iraq's refurbished schools with new textbooks and the training of 50,000 Iraqi police and military. Parolin indicated that the Vatican's nuncio in Iraq generally shared this positive perception, despite continuing concerns over security in some areas. Bolton acknowledged that the security situation was "not what we would like," largely as a result of the actions of Saddam holdovers and other terrorist elements attracted to Iraq.

3. (c) Addressing broader international engagement in Iraq, Bolton conveyed "reasonable confidence" that there would be a new UNSC resolution. He pointed out that the President had also met with Chancellor Schroeder and President Chirac, that the P-5 and G-8 had met, and that there appeared to be a convergence on how to get a resolution done. Contrary to perceptions of acting alone, Bolton noted that troops from over 30 countries were on the ground in Iraq, and that, although the U.S. role is predominant, there was considerable international support. Bolton also sought to counter the misimpression that the U.S. was looking to hold onto power in Iraq, observing that "nobody will be happier than the U.S. to return power to the Iraqi people." The worst outcome, he cautioned, would be a bad transition that resulted in an unstable and fragmented Iraq.

4. (c) Parolin asked Bolton for his assessment of the timing of a transfer to Iraqi sovereignty and authority. Bolton recalled the Secretary's recent assessment that it would take six months to prepare a constitution, but noted that some in Iraq have insisted it will take at least a year to reach that stage. This was not a matter of bad faith on their part, but simply that a whole new political culture had to take root and big decisions had to be made that would affect Iraqi society for years to come. The U.S. did not accept that this would take a year, but we appreciated the importance of

getting it right. In this context, Bolton observed that France's desire to transfer sovereignty without authority created a potential for confusion of roles and potential conflict that was unacceptable.

----- Concerns for Religious Minorities -----

15. (c) Reiterating that the Vatican nuncio's impression of the situation in Iraq was generally positive, Parolin asked Bolton for his assessment of the situation for religious minorities in light of some recent evidence of religious intolerance in the south. The Under Secretary observed that cooperation between religious groups has been good, and that the risk of fragmentation has been greatly reduced. While there are still elements in the south that would like to see an Islamic republic under Sharia law, this represents only about one-third of the Shiites or 20 percent of the total population. Bolton assured Parolin that the U.S. was committed to building an Iraq in which freedom of religion was respected. Parolin observed that some Christian shops that served alcohol had been burned. Bolton pledged to call any incidents of suspected intolerance to Washington's attention, and urged the Holy See's nuncio to relay information about such incidents to the Coalition Provisional Authority. Both agreed that it would be better to deal with these problems early before they became regular occurrences. Parolin observed that the Holy See had been encouraged by some statements of a leading Ayatollah in favor of democracy, but noted that these "are just words, and we need to see what happens in reality." Bolton noted that some Iranian mullahs continued to stir up problems in the south.

----- Iran's Nuclear Threat -----

16. (c) The greater threat from Iran, Bolton then noted, comes from Iranian efforts to develop a nuclear capability, which the President and President Putin had also discussed at Camp David. Bolton said Russia had agreed not to ship nuclear fuel to Iran, and that President Putin appreciated the dangers posed by a nuclear Iran, even while some in the Russian government and industry continued to cause problems. Bolton observed that there appeared to be a debate in Iran about whether to sign the IAEA additional protocol, but, unfortunately, no debate about whether to have nuclear weapons. The U.S. view, he told Parolin, was that Iran not only had to cooperate with IAEA inspections, but also to refrain from enriching uranium. The looming problem was that once the new reactor was operational, even if it operated under IAEA safeguards, it would have enough fuel in its cycle to make 80 nuclear weapons. It was clear to the U.S. that Iran's intention was to gain national control over the full nuclear production cycle.

17. (c) In response to Iran's nuclear ambitions and reluctant cooperation with the IAEA, the U.S. had decided to refer the issue to the UNSC in order to demonstrate international concern and seek a UNSC president's Statement urging Iran to cooperate. Parolin noted that he understood that Iran had agreed to accept IAEA inspections, but U/S Bolton pointed out that although Iran says it will cooperate, it continues to delay and deny access - as occurred recently at an Iranian electrical facility. Emphasizing that Iran was engaged in "a campaign of deception," Bolton noted that IAEA Head El Baradei had warned Iran that if it did not cooperate immediately, it could not meet the October 31 IAEA deadline.

----- North Korea: Little Progress -----

18. (c) Turning to the North Korean nuclear threat, U/S Bolton stressed the U.S. desire to address this threat by diplomatic means. Unfortunately, the outcome of the recent talks in Beijing was "not that positive." Parolin recalled that all parties had agreed that the region should be free of nuclear weapons, and suggested that this offered a positive point of departure. U/S Bolton explained that the only real outcome at the talks had been the agreement to meet again in two months, but that it now appeared that even this would not happen on schedule as North Korea had indicated it would not be ready to meet at that time. He pointed out that a high-level Chinese visit to North Korea had been canceled out of concern that the North Koreans would rebuff the Chinese appeal for cooperation.

19. (c) Parolin asked Bolton about the degree of U.S. willingness to take North Korea's security concerns into account. Bolton indicated that the U.S. has discussed some form of security assurances, which could be put in writing,

though not in the form of a treaty. Bolton pointed out that the U.S. had been prepared to put this on the table and would be prepared to do so at the appropriate time in the future. Parolin reiterated the Holy See's desire that this problem be resolved through dialogue.

Proliferation Security Initiative

110. (c) Parolin said he had reviewed carefully the information provided by the Embassy on the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and queried whether it was being applied only to North Korea. U/S Bolton observed that North Korea earns hard currency from its weapons sales, which it uses to develop its own weapons programs. The U.S., Bolton said, believes an increase in the level of interdiction of shipments going in and out of North Korea would enhance security in regions where they are sold as well as in the Korean peninsula. Asked to compare the PSI to a naval blockade, U/S Bolton explained that the initiative was broader, seeking to build on existing export control mechanisms aimed at prohibiting exports of weapons-related materials. President Bush has called on other countries to criminalize the export of items related to WMD, which up to now has been a legal gap in many countries domestic legislation. The goal, he stressed, is to make it harder for states to participate in such trade. Asked about the relationship between PSI and broader multilateral arms control bodies such as the Wassenaar Group and OPCW, Bolton explained that PSI aimed to fill a gap in these existing mechanisms by creating some form of enforcement mechanism, not to supplant them. Noting that there are some areas where international authorities are unclear, Bolton suggested that there could be an evolution in international law on the suppression of unlawful acts at sea through state practice.

Multilateral Arms Control

111. (c) As the meeting drew to a close, DFM Parolin expressed his surprise when he discovered at a recent CTBT conference in Vienna that the U.S. "was not there." U/S Bolton noted that the U.S. had been present a low level only, as a result of our decision not to ratify the CTBT. Nevertheless, Bolton pointed out, the President's moratorium on nuclear testing remains in place. In this context, Parolin observed that the Holy See was "worried" about the problem of international disarmament and believed that multilateral cooperation was essential to meet the threat posed by WMD. U/S Bolton responded that the U.S. recognized the importance of multilateral arms control, but also recognized that in a world where North Korea, Iran, Libya and Syria operated outside of such mechanisms in their pursuit of WMD, other measures were needed to meet the threat. "People are watching Iran and North Korea," Bolton cautioned, "and if they succeed in their pursuit of nuclear weapons, the whole NPT framework would be at risk." Bolton recalled President Bush's admonition that the biggest threat to the world today is the most dangerous weapons in the hands of the most dangerous people. These are individuals and groups not susceptible to deterrence or threats of retaliation, and that is the scenario the U.S. is working to prevent. Parolin agreed that weapons in irresponsible hands represented a grave danger and must be prevented.

112. (U) Under Secretary Bolton has reviewed this cable.

113. (U) Minimize considered.

Nicholson

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